

Iscah Migration Newsletter

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Hey everyone

Welcome to the final newsletter of a VERY different and difficult year of 2020.

A busy few weeks as states start to reopen again for 190 and 491 sponsorships

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1) New invitation dates for Skill Select

The Government is closely monitoring migration and visa settings to ensure they are consistent with public health measures, are flexible and do not displace job opportunities for Australians, so that Australia can effectively respond to the immediate and subsequent impacts of COVID-19. As such, targeted invitation rounds have occurred since May 2020. The Department will run quarterly invitation rounds for the remainder of 2020-21 program year. The next invitation round will run in January 2021

(Source: DHA)

2) State 491/190 allocations for 2020/21 Program Year

State	Skilled Nominated (Subclass 190) Visa	Skilled Work Regional (Subclass 491) visa	Business Innovation and Investment Program (BIIP)
ACT	702	598	30
NSW	3,550	2,800	2,200
VIC	2,500	1,043	1,750
QLD	1,000	1,250	1,200
NT	500	500	75
WA	1,100	340	360
SA	1,500	1,850	1,000
TAS	1,000	1,400	45
Total	11,852	9,781	6,660

(Source: DHA)

3) Victoria to reopen for 190/491s in January 2021

Victoria's skilled visa nomination program (subclass 190 and 491) reopens on 5 January 2021

<https://liveinmelbourne.vic.gov.au/news-events/news/2020/victorias-skilled-visa-nomination-program-subclass-190-and-491-reopens-on-5-january-2021>

4) Global Talent visa

Some useful Global Talent Visa statistics

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/foi/files/2020/fa-201001187-document-released.PDF>

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/foi/files/2020/fa-201100602-document-released.pdf>

New website for those interested in the Global Talent visa –

<https://www.globalaustralia.gov.au>

5) Vetassess policy on Social Professionals

Updated skills assessment criteria for Social Professionals

<https://www.vetassess.com.au/home/updates/post/updated-assessment-criteria-for-social-professionals>

6) Criteria for additional years on a 485 visa

Criteria for additional period on first 485 visa if studied in a regional area ...

International graduates studying in a regional area

From 2021, Temporary Graduate visa (TGV) holders (post-study work stream) who have graduated from a regional educational institution and have lived in regional Australia on their first TGV will be eligible for a second TGV.

Those eligible for a second TGV will be required to remain in a regional area for the duration of their new visa.

Eligibility will include international students who studied at a regional campus of a metropolitan university.

International graduates who have studied and lived in Category 2 will be eligible for an additional year on a second Temporary Graduate visa.

International graduates who have studied and lived in Category 3 will be eligible for an additional 2 years on a second Temporary Graduate visa.

The initiative will provide an additional incentive for international students to study at a regional institution and to live in regional areas post-study, boosting diversity and prosperity in regional Australia.

At the same time, it will help ease growing infrastructure pressures in our major cities.

There is no change to Student visas. This option is available as an initiative for international students to study and live in regional Australia

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/.../regional-migration>

7) Recent media articles

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/labor-s-clare-o-neil-calls-for-more-skilled-permanent-migrants-as-part-of-coronavirus-reset>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/call-for-australian-partner-visa-rule-change-so-applicants-don-t-have-to-fly-offshore-during-pandemic>

<https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/home-affairs-and-the-great-partner-visa-covers-up,14574>

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/stupid-and-downright-dangerous-parents-of-australians-to-be-forced-overseas-to-receive-visas-20201201-p56jfe.html>

<https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/the-budget-confirms-morrison-wants-to-reboot-mass-migration,14582>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/analysis-of-coronavirus-impact-on-australia-s-population-reveals-a-spike-in-regional-migration>

<https://independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/the-foolery-of-the-global-talent-independent-visa,14617>

8) Social Worker added to PMSOL

Social Worker added to Priority PMSOL occupation list

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/employing-and-sponsoring-someone/sponsoring-workers/pmsol>

9) Advice for relationship status on EOIs

Advice from DHA on how to record your relationship status on an EOI.

Posted on: 26/11/2020 at 09:20

Relationship Status: When completing your Expression of Interest (EOI) you should select Partner as your relationship status if you have a spouse or de facto partner. The Department's definitions of these terms are available at: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/glossary> # Do not use the relationship status 'engaged' if this person is also your de facto partner. You should ensure this information remains current throughout the life of your EOI.

10) Family visa applicant concessions due to Covid

The Morrison Government is making further changes to the Family visa program to support applicants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government has been working over recent months to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on visa holders and has already introduced a number of arrangements to support those who have been impacted. This includes providing visa holders flexibility to remain in Australia, or to continue their visa pathway even if they have been unable to travel due to the current international border restrictions.

In addition to these changes, the Government will allow certain Family visas which have been applied for outside Australia, to be granted while the visa applicant is in Australia. This temporary concession will be for people who are in Australia and are not able to travel offshore to be granted the visa due to COVID-19 related border closures. The Government estimates the change will benefit about 4000 visa applicants currently in Australia, predominately Partner applicants.

Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs Alan Tudge said the changes would be temporary and will be reviewed in line with any changes to Australia's international travel restrictions.

"These are common sense changes to reduce the impact that the travel restrictions are having on our immigration program," Mr Tudge said.

"Importantly, this will allow a foreign national who is a partner of an Australian citizen to progress their visa, without having to leave the country.

"I know this will be a relief to those Australians who were concerned that their loved one may have to leave the country with no certainty as to when they could return."

These changes are in addition to the Government's decision to almost double the number of Partner visa places in 2020-21. It is expected that three quarters of these visas will go to those already onshore, with the increase in numbers addressing nearly all the present applicants awaiting for finalisation of their visa.

The temporary concession to allow applicants to remain in Australia to progress their visa will apply to the following Family visa subclasses:

- Partner (subclass 309) visa
- Prospective Marriage (subclass 300) visa
- Child (subclass 101) visa
- Adoption (subclass 102) visa
- Dependent Child (subclass 445) visa

The changes will come into effect early 2021. Further information will be made available on the Department of Home Affairs website.

(Source: DHA)

11) Priority for English tests for Employer sponsored visas

Are you applying for a Permanent Employer Sponsored Entry visa? If you haven't been able to get an approved English language test for your visa, we can help you with a priority booking.

Are you applying for a Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) or a Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (subclass 187)? If so, you are required to lodge your visa application within six months of the date that your employer nomination is approved. And, to lodge your application, you must have your English test results.

As a result of Covid-19 restrictions across Victoria, some applicants have been unable to get their IELTS test in time to lodge an application.

IELTS and the Department of Home Affairs want to make sure you can get a test as soon as possible to lodge your application. But, there are a few conditions.

<https://ielts.com.au/ielts-in-australia/priority-ielts-booking>

12) PTE change in English score comparisons

PTE english scores change

PTE have changed their comparison between their scores and the IELTS test through this research
<https://pearsonpte.com/articles/2020-pte-and-ielts-concordance-report-summary-and-faqs>

Note from their page :

Will Australian, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom governments now be changing their score requirements for visas? Pearson has updated our government partners on the outcomes of our concordance study. It is their decision as to whether they make changes to the score requirements for visa applications.

This is a release of our research findings; pending their review, governments and institutions may decide to make changes to their requirements.

We (Iscah) are trying to clarify with Home Affairs what effect this will have as their website and legislation has not changed yet

Update:

We know that some of you have been worried about aspects of our Concordance Report, published below. We didn't intend to confuse anyone so we hope that this message helps explain.

The report is about how the PTE scores align with IELTS scores. Nothing has changed to the PTE exam itself, how it is scored, or the scores that you need to achieve for your Australian, New Zealand, and UK visas or for university admissions.

Your PTE test result is still valid and will not change. A candidate who scored 79 will continue to score a 79, their level of English Proficiency will remain the same.

We'd like to explain a little about the purpose of the Concordance Report – it is to enable Governments, Universities, and professional bodies to see how we have updated our score ranges against IELTS bands.

It does not require them to make any changes or to take any action regarding your PTE test scores. For the majority of universities, where the test scores are typically set in the mid-range for academic admissions purposes, there is minimal change to the scores.

If universities, professional bodies, such as Nursing, or the Australian, New Zealand or UK governments decide to review their PTE Academic score requirements and make changes we expect this would happen over a period of months and years and that notice would be given if score requirements change so that everyone is aware and can prepare.

We hope this has clarified the purpose of our report. If you have the time, we do have more information and FAQs available below.

We would also be pleased to hear from you if you have any further questions:

<https://pearsonpte.com/contact-us>

13) NSW update on State regional sponsorship

NSW 491/190 update

<https://www.business.nsw.gov.au/live-and-work-in-nsw/visas-and-immigration>

<https://www.business.nsw.gov.au/live-and-work-in-nsw/visas-and-immigration/skilled-visas/skilled-work-regional-visa-subclass-491>

<https://www.business.nsw.gov.au/live-and-work-in-nsw/visas-and-immigration/skilled-visas/nsw-skilled-occupations-list>

14) QLD update on State regional sponsorship

QLD state 491/190 update

<https://migration.qld.gov.au>

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-processing-times/global-visa-processing-times>

15) Vetassess help document for common mistakes

Vetassess – 7 common mistakes with skills assessments –

https://img07.en25.com/Web/BendigoKanganInstitute/%7B2ec549e8-7d55-46be-b6b6-307da76145b6%7D_Blog_-_7_Comm on_Mistakes_to_avoid_in_an_assessment_application.pdf

16) Visa fee waivers and refunds

Information on DHA visa waivers and refunds

<https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/refunds-and-waivers-visa-application-charges>

17) Prospective marriage visas extended

Prospective marriage visa - 300

visa duration extended for some people

The Regulations address the negative impact of COVID-19 travel restrictions by extending the duration of Subclass 300 (Prospective Marriage) visas to 31 March 2022, for those outside Australia who held that type of visa at any time between 6 October 2020 and 10 December 2020. This is a significant extension of visas that otherwise expire nine months after the date of grant.

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2020L01577/Explanatory%20Statement/Text>

18) Annual change to Occupation Lists

Annual changes to MLTSSL/STSOL occupations

DHA have confirmed this will not take place until improvement in the Covid effected employment market. This is planned now for March 2021 and maybe delayed further beyond this financial year

19) Vetassess increase skills assessment fees

https://img07.en25.com/Web/BendigoKanganInsti-tute/%7Bf8de234c-9965-4ec6-9f2f-2a7ddfaf7674%7D_Price_Review_Proposed_Fees_with_CPI_Increase_V3.pdf

20) DHA update visa processing times

Update to DHA visa processing times

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-processing-times/global-visa-processing-times>

Ok folks
That's all for this month

Hope you all have an enjoyable Xmas
and New years with family and friends and KEEP SAFE.

See you all on Monday 18th January 2021



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21) Changes to Business Skills criteria

The Morrison Government is reforming business and investor visas to maximise the economic benefits for Australia. The Business Innovation and Investment Program (BIIP) will be simplified from nine to four streams and there will be changes to eligibility requirements.

Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs Alan Tudge said the changes would drive investment in key sectors and create Australian jobs.

“Almost \$1.3 billion dollars was invested through the Business Innovation and Investment Program last year, investment that is critical to our COVID-19 economic recovery,” Mr Tudge said.

“These changes will maximise the economic contribution of these high value investors to get the best possible outcome for Australians.

“Our Migration Program for 2020-21 is clearly focussed on job creators, those with key skills and migrants who are going to invest in Australia’s future.”

The number of places available in the BIIP has almost doubled from 6862 in 2019-20 to 13,500 places for 2020-2021.

The changes align with feedback received from stakeholders as part of the Department of Home Affairs review into the BIIP that concluded in February 2020.

Key changes: (in effect from 1 July 2021)

- The program will be simplified from nine to four visa streams: Business Innovation, Entrepreneur, Investor, and Significant Investor. There will be a clear pathway to permanent residency for each category.
- The Premium Investor, Significant Business History and Venture Capital Entrepreneur visas will be closed to new applications from 1 July 2021. Applications already lodged for these visas will still be processed.
- Provisional visa holders in all four streams will be able to apply for permanent residence if they meet the requirements after three years, but the provisional visa will now be valid for five years, meaning they have additional time to meet the requirements.
- Business Innovation and Significant Investor visa holders will also continue to be able to extend their provisional visas if they do not meet the business and residence thresholds in the required timeframe.
 - Business Innovation provisional visa holders can apply for a two-year extension provided they demonstrate a realistic commitment to continuing to manage a business that has been actively operating in Australia for the previous two years.
 - Significant Investor provisional visa holders can apply for two, two-year extensions provided they continue to maintain their complying significant investment.
- The requirements for Business Innovation visa holders will be increased to ensure the program is attracting migrants with proven business skills. Business Innovation visa holders will be required to hold business assets of \$1.25 million (up from \$800,000) and have an annual turnover of \$750,000 (up from \$500,000) to prove their business acumen. These settings have not changed since 2012 when the program was first introduced.
- The \$200,000 funding threshold required for Entrepreneur visa applicants will be scrapped. Applicants will need to be endorsed by a State or Territory government. This follows the successful Supporting Innovation in South Australia pilot program and will give states and territories an additional way to attract international entrepreneurs.
- The Government will also be consulting widely with industry to inform any further changes to the Complying Investment Framework. Any changes to the framework will be announced in the early half of next year, with sufficient time for businesses and investors to adjust.

Details of the review and information about the changes are available on the Department of Home Affairs website.

22) WA no longer allowing s48 applicants

Western Australia state government no longer supporting s48 barred state nominations. The following is being sent out to prospective nominees ...

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing uncertainty surrounding the closure of Australia's international borders, the Department of Training and Workforce Development has reviewed applications submitted for the State Nominated Migration Program (SNMP).

Unfortunately, as this applicant is impacted by the Department of Home Affairs section 48 bar, which requires them to lodge their visa application outside Australia, the application for State nomination is unable to be processed given current circumstances and will be withdrawn with the application fee refunded. We understand this outcome will be disappointing for you.

If the applicant is no longer impacted by the section 48 bar and currently resides in Australia, please provide evidence to Migration Services by 30 December 2020.

If you are unable to provide evidence that the applicant is not subject to the section 48 bar and that they currently reside in Australia, the withdrawal of the application will be finalised and the application fee of \$200.00 will be refunded to the credit card on which the payment was made.

23) New Immigration Minister

New Immigration Minister is Alex Hawke

From his twitter feed ..

Grateful to be asked by PM to serve as Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services & Multicultural Affairs in the Scott Morrison Government. Australia's great migration story will continue to be an essential part of our ongoing prosperity, success & recovery

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Hawke